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PRODUCING DESIRED COLOR STIMULI WITH TRICHROMATORS: A TUTORIAL ON TECHNIQUE

MRS. FRANCES A. GREENE

VISUAL DISPLAY SYSTEMS BRANCH **HUMAN ENGINEERING DIVISION** 

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FOR THE COMMANDER

CHARLES BATES, JR.
Director, Human Engineering Division

Air Force Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory

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#### PREFACE

The theory of color mixing described herein was developed and used during a cooperative research program between the Air Force Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory, Human Engineering Division, Visual Display Systems Branch and the Human Factors Group, Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, England.

The author is a member of the Visual Display Systems Branch and was assigned to the Royal Aircraft Establishment under NATO Working Party 61 of the Aircrew Standardization and Coordinating Committee (ASCC) from December 1982 - July 1984. The research effort was funded by the European Office of Aerospace Research and Development under AFOSR Grant 83-0085. The author's participation was under work unit 71841144.

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# PRODUCING DESIRED COLOR STIMULI WITH TRICHROMATORS: A TUTORIAL ON TECHNIQUE

#### 1. SUMMARY

This report summarizes the theory of color mixing when using a trichromator system. The four-channel colorimeter system described is of a generic nature. The derivation of formulae needed to compute chromaticity coordinates and luminance requirements are presented. A numerical example is provided which demonstrates the application of the formulae.

#### 2. INTRODUCTION

The need sometimes arises in laboratory experimentation to produce stimuli of precise chromaticity and luminance. The need this author has encountered involves color matching experiments, where two stimuli are generated that must be matched along one dimension (either dominant wavelength, excitation purity, or luminance). In the author's case, the two stimuli formed a bipartite field (Greene & Laycock, 1984). One-half of the matching field was set by the experimenter to be a predetermined and fixed chromaticity and luminance. The subject adjusted the other half of the bipartite field for a match in one of the above mentioned dimensions.

To produce the two stimuli for color-matching, a trichromator system is described which mixes the appropriate wavelengths in proper luminance proportions to generate the bipartite field. Although this report describes a generic colorimeter, it is representative of ones currently existing in laboratories in the Crew Systems Effectiveness Branch, Air Force Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory (AFAMRL/HEF), Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and in the Human Factors Group, Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, England.

## 3. TRICHROMATOR DESCRIPTION

To generate stimuli for color-matching experiments, a trichromator system was chosen by this author to produce light sources of different wavelengths for mixing. Depending upon how much luminance is required of the stimuli, the light source for the trichromator system can either be a single source divided among the three monochromators, or multiple light sources, one for each of the three monochromators.

Because of the exact nature of the mathematical equations used in the calculation of wavelengths, it is desirable to have monochromators whose selectable wavelengths are accurate to 0.1 nm. Otherwise, the mixing of wavelengths will result in less than desired precision in resultant chromaticity coordinates.

With a trichromator, monochromatic light from the three monochromators is combined through four optical channels in such a way as to produce two stimuli. In order to do this, one of the monochromators is fixed at an anchor wavelength, usually in the longer wavelengths of the visible spectrum (i.e., 600+ nm). The light from the anchor wavelength is split in half by use of a beam-splitter, forming two channels. Light from one of the other two monochromators is combined with one channel of the anchor wavelength, in exact quantities of luminance from each, to produce one stimulus of a precise chromaticity. In the same way, the third monochromator combines monochromatic light of a specific luminance with the other channel of the anchor wavelength to produce a second stimulus, again of a required chromaticity.

Figure 1 shows diagrammatically the trichromator system presently configured at the Royal Aircraft Establishment. The four optical channels are labelled for ease of understanding. In this example, light from channels 2 and 4 form the anchor wavelength channels. The monochromator in channels 2 and 4 is always set at the anchor wavelength. The light output from channels 1 and 2 is mixed to form the chromaticity, of a controlled luminance, required for one of the stimuli. Similarly, the output from channels 3 and 4 is combined to produce the chromaticity of the second stimulus, again at a precise luminance level. This combination of light outputs is shown in Figure 1. The AFAMRL trichromator system is nearly identical.

## 4. COLOR MIXING

The tristimulus values resulting from the mixture of two or more lights are the sums of the lights' individual tristimulus values. For a mixture consisting of only two lights, the point representing the chromaticity of the mixture is located on the straight line connecting the points representing the chromaticities of the two lights on one of the Commission Internationale de l'Eclairage (CIE) chromaticity diagrams (Graham, 1965, pp. 270-294). Any of the CIE chromaticity diagrams may be used for the purposes described herein, but the present discussion will deal only with the 1931 CIE diagram, as it is the most familiar. It is this fact of color mixing which describes the basis for the theory of the trichromator system. On the straight line drawn between two points on the spectrum locus of the 1931 CIE diagram lie all the chromaticity coordinates achievable by the mixture of these two lights.

There are three steps this author went through to use the trichromator system for color mixing. The first was to select the anchor wavelength for mixing. It was the author's desire to produce stimuli at a fairly high luminance level -  $2000 \text{ cd/m}^2$ . It was this consideration, coupled with the desire to examine dominant wavelengths in the longer end of the visible spectrum (640 nm), which influenced the choice of the anchor wavelength. The luminance calibration of the light output from the monochromator in channels 2/4 revealed the need for an anchor wavelength of 650 nm for the particular color-matching experiment of interest.

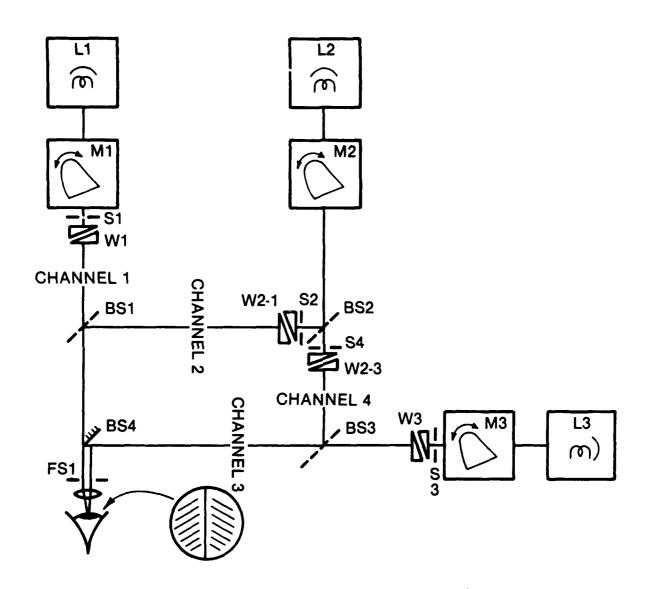


Figure 1. Optical Representation of the Trichrimator Hardware.

The second step was to calculate the variable wavelength for mixture with the anchor wavelength. This variable wavelength determination is dependent upon what stimulus chromaticity required.

The third step was to calculate the luminance proportions of the anchor and variable wavelengths required to produce a given stimulus chromaticity at a precise luminance. The next two sections describe the calculations required to achieve steps 2 and 3. The anchor wavelength setting can vary depending upon the experimental conditions under investigation.

#### 4.1 Computation of Variable Wavelength

Figure 2 illustrates the mixing of wavelengths within a chromaticity diagram. Point "A" on the diagram shows the location on the spectrum locus of the chosen anchor wavelength, 650 nm in this example. Point "B" represents the desired chromaticity within the diagram. In order to determine which wavelength must be combined with the anchor wavelength to produce the desired chromaticity, the following procedure is used. A straight line is drawn from the anchor wavelength on the spectrum locus (Point "A") through the desired point within the chromaticity diagram (Point "B"), and extended to where the line intersects the spectrum locus, 493 nm in this example (Point "C"). The dominant wavelength represented by Point "C" is what is required for mixing with the anchor wavelength to produce the desired chromaticity.

It is possible to produce any desired chromaticity within the diagram by the combination of two dominant wavelength sources with appropriate luminance contributions from each source. The mixture of the two wavelengths in appropriate quantities determines what stimulus chromaticity is produced. In this case, the appropriate quantities of monochromatic light to be mixed are expressed in terms of luminance of each wavelength. The calculation of the amounts of luminance required at each wavelength is discussed in a later section.

The graphical method described above is not only tedious, but also does not yield exact answers. To circumvent this, a mathematical solution may be implemented on a digital computer.

Trigonometry is used to compute a table of angles, theta, formed when drawing a line from the anchor wavelength to every point on the spectrum locus at one-nanometer intervals. The chromaticity coordinates of points on the spectrum locus are provided at one-nanometer intervals in texts such as Wyszecki and Stiles, 1982, pp. 725-735. Figure 3 illustrates this trigonometric solution. Figure 4 shows graphically the determination of theta (referenced to an anchor wavelength of 650 nm) for a specific example - 490 nm.

A copy of a FORTRAN program written to determine theta angles is found in Appendix A. From this FORTRAN program, once the anchor wavelength has been selected and its chromaticity coordinates entered, a table of thetas is compiled for each one-nanometer point around the

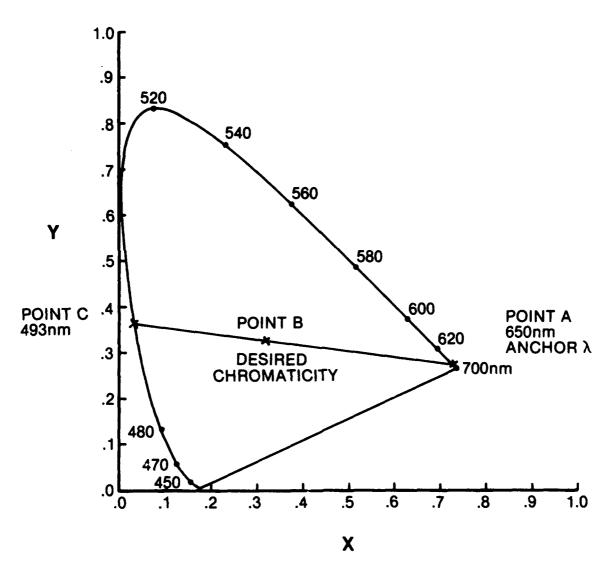


Figure 2. Trichromator Operation in 1931 CIE Chromaticity Space.

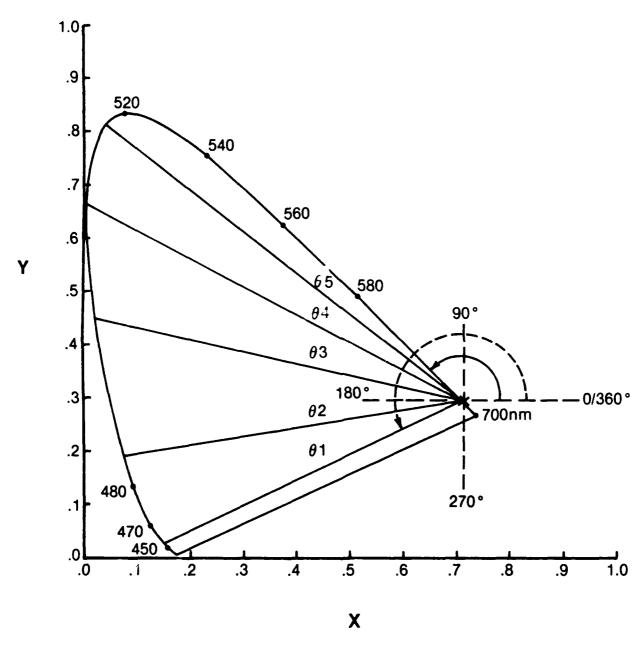


Figure 3. New Axis Coordinate Grid for Determination of Theta Angle.

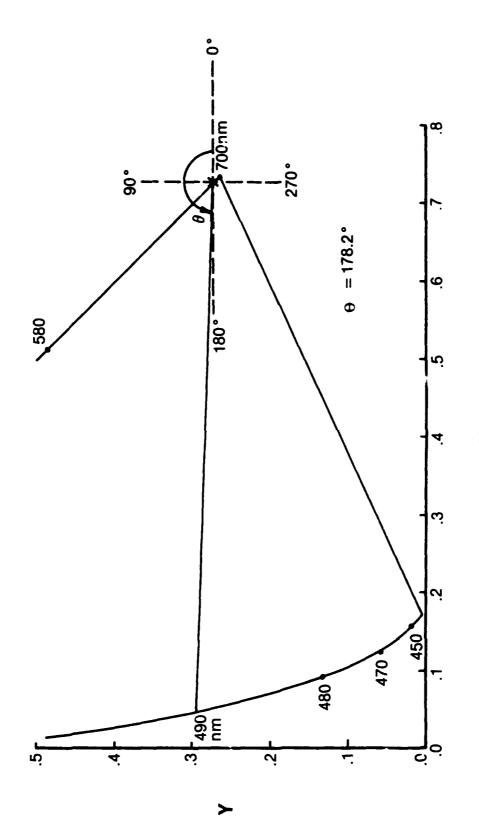


Figure 4. Example of use of Trigonometric Solution to Theta Angle.

spectrum locus (360-830 nm), referenced to the anchor wavelength. A compilation of thetas for an anchor wavelength of 650 nm is shown in Appendix B.

For the sake of convenience, this tabulated set of thetas is stored on a computer as a data file. A second computer program then can be written to search through the table of thetas to find the closest integer wavelengths, and then perform the necessary linear interpolation to arrive at the exact wavelength needed for mixing. A copy of a BASIC program written to achieve this purpose is found in Appendix C.

This section has summarized a mathematical solution to the problem of determining the wavelength required for mixing with an anchor wavelength to achieve a desired stimulus chromaticity. The next section describes a procedure for determining the luminances which are required to produce the desired chromaticity at a specific luminance.

#### 4.2 Luminance Calculations

With the trichromator system, the luminance contributions from the three monochromators is controlled by a series of calibrated neutral density wedges. The author's practice has been to store this luminance calibration data on a computer as a data file.

The typical situation the researcher generally faces is one of trying to produce a specified chromaticity at a controlled luminance level. Once the anchor wavelength is chosen, two more steps remain. The first is to determine the variable dominant wavelength to produce the desired point on the chromaticity diagram. This step was outlined above in Section 4.1. The second step is to calculate the luminances required for the two dominant wavelengths to arrive at the needed luminance level.

In order to accomplish these two steps, the following equations are provided and were derived from Hunt (1975).

Given that:

$$X3 = \frac{\left(\frac{X1}{Y1}\right) \times L1}{\left(\frac{L1}{Y1}\right)} + \left(\frac{X2}{Y2}\right) \times L2}$$

$$(1)$$

$$Y3 = \frac{\frac{(L2 + L2)}{\left(\frac{L1}{Y1}\right) + \left(\frac{L2}{Y2}\right)}}{(2)}$$

and that 
$$L1 + L2 = L3$$
 (3)

where:

(X2,Y2) = CIE chromaticity coordinates for the anchor wavelength setting (channel 2),

(X3, Y3) = CIE chromaticity coordinates for the desired point inside chromaticity space,

L1 = luminance from channel 1,

L2 = luminance from channel 2,

and L3 = luminance of point of desired chromaticity.

Algebraic manipulation of the above equations results in the equations for the luminance necessary from each monochromator. The results of the algebraic manipulations are as follows:

$$L1 = ((-d / (c-d)) \times L3$$
 (4)

and 
$$L2 = ((c / (c-d)) \times L3)$$
 (5)

where:

$$c = ((Y3-Y1) / Y1)$$

and d = ((Y3-Y2) / Y2)

## 5. EXAMPLE

It may be helpful to see a computational example using the above derived formulae. For this example, it is desired to produce a stimulus whose chromaticity coordinates are x = 0.2, y = 0.7 at a luminance of  $500 \text{ cd/m}^2$ .

The anchor wavelength for this example is 650 nm (x = 0.72599, y = 0.27401). The first task is to draw a straight line from the 650 nm point on the spectrum locus of the 1931 CIE diagram, through the desired chromaticity (x = 0.2, y = 0.7). Figure 5 illustrates this step.

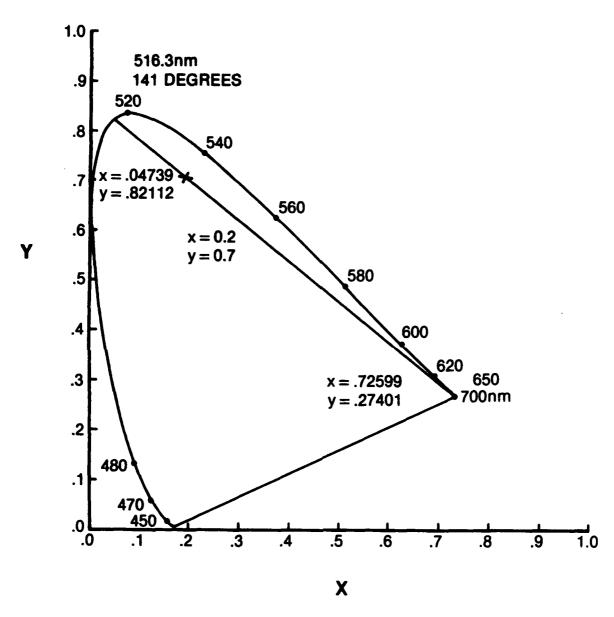


Figure 5. Finding Theta Angle and Spectrum Locus Intersection for Numerical Example.

The next task is to calculate the resulting theta angle. To avoid the ruler-and-protractor approach, the aforementioned computer programs were used to determine the theta angle of 140.997 degrees. Examining the data table of theta angles provided in Appendix B reveals the required monochromator setting needed for mixture with 650 nm is between 516 and 517 nanometers (between 141.3 and 140.7 degrees). A simple linear interpolation is performed to find the monochromator setting needed for mixture with the anchor wavelength. This calculation produces a wavelength of 516.3 nm.

Equations 4 and 5 define the luminance requirements from each of the two dominant wavelengths in order to produce the required stimulus at a given luminance level. In this example, the desired chromaticity of x = 0.2, y = 0.7 is to have a luminance of 500 cd/m<sup>2</sup>.

Upon examining these equations, it can be seen that the variables needed for input are the (x,y) chromaticity coordinates for the following: anchor wavelength, variable wavelength setting for mixture with the anchor wavelength, and desired chromaticity within the 1931 CIE diagram. At this point, two of the three pairs of chromaticity coordinates are known - the anchor wavelength and the chromaticity of the desired point within the chromaticity diagram.

A linear interpolation must be performed on the x and y coordinates (between the chromaticity coordinates for 516 and 517 nm) to obtain the final pair of coordinates for the equations. Linear interpolation produces the resultant coordinates: x = 0.04739, y = 0.82112.

To use Equations 4 and 5, we define our variables as follows: let X1, Y1 be the coordinates of the variable monochromator in channel 1, X1 = 0.04739, Y1 = 0.82112, (516.3 nm in this example). Let X2, Y2 be the coordinates of the anchor wavelength, X2 = 0.72599, Y2 = 0.27401, (650 nm in this example). Let X3, Y3 be the coordinates of the desired chromaticity, X3 = 0.2, Y3 = 0.7.

Substituting values into Equation 4 we have:

$$\frac{-(0.7 - 0.27401)}{0.27401}$$
L1 = 
$$\frac{0.7 - 0.82112}{0.82112} - \frac{0.7 - 0.27401}{0.27401}$$
(6)

Solving Equation 6, we find that L1, the luminance contribution at 516.3 nm, is  $456.8 \text{ cd/m}^2$ . Thus, via Equation 3, the luminance required at 650 nm (L2) is  $43.2 \text{ cd/m}^2$ .

#### 6. CONCLUSION

The numerical example worked in Section 5 is for producing one stimulus of a required chromaticity at a desired luminance level. The identical procedure would be followed to determine the other dominant wavelength needed to mix with the anchor wavelength to produce a second stimulus. In the same fashion as above, the luminance contributions would also be determined.

The theory of color mixing using a tri-stimulus colorimeter to produce two stimuli of known chromaticity and desired luminance has been presented. The derivation of the required formulae involve a simple algebraic manipulation of a set of equations. Since this manipulation has not heretofore been published in the literature, it is hoped that the sharing of this basic information will prove useful.

```
Appendix A - FORTRAN Program to Compute Theta Angles
0000000
            FILENAME ANCHOR.FTN
            GIVEN AN "ANCHOR" POINT, DRAW A CHORD TO EACH OF 471 POINTS ON
            1931 CIE CHROMATICITY DÍAGRAM, MEASURING ANGLES ACCORDING TO
            THE FOLLOWING CONVENTION:
                                             90
                                        180 ++ 0
CCCC
                                            270
            DIMENSION X(471), Y(471), ANGLE(471)
            DATA 0/57.2958/
CCC
            INPUT 471 PAIRS OF (X,Y) COORDINATES DEFINING CHROMATICITY
            LOCUS FROM DISK FILE
C
            OPEN (UNIT=1, NAME='CMF31.DAT', TYPE='OLD', ACCESS='SEQUENTIAL')
            READ(1,*) (X(I), Y(I), I = 1, 471)
CLOSE (UNIT=1)
C
            INPUT X,Y COORDINATES OF ANCHOR POINT
            TYPE 10
     10
            FORMAT(/, ' X, Y COORDINATES OF ANCHOR POINT? ',$)
            ACCEPT *, XA. YA
C
            COMPUTE ANGLES
Ĉ
            DO 100 I = 1, 471
CCC
                  IF Y(I) =YA, COMPUTE THETA DIFFERENTLY
                  IF ( Y(I) .EQ. YA ) GO TO 20
CCCCCCCC
                 FOUR POSSIBLE CASES:
                                           XA \ge XI, YA \ge YI
                                           XA >= XI, YA < YI
XA < XI, YA < YI
XA < XI, YA > YI
                 COMPUTE THETA AND ADJUST IT ACCORDINGLY
                  THETA = ATAN2 (XA - X(I), YA - Y(I)) * Q
C
                  IF ( YA .LT. YI
                                                      ) THETA = THETA + 180.
                  IF ( XA .LT. XI .AND. YA .GT. YI ) THETA = THETA + 36C.
                 GO TO 60
```

```
C
                  IF (X(I) - XA) 30, 40, 50
     20
C
      30
                  THETA = 90.
                  GO TO 60
CCC
                  (ANCHOR POINT AND LOCUS POINT ARE IDENTICAL: SET THETA = 0)
      40
                  THETA = 0.
                  GO TO 100
C
      50
                  THETA = 270.
CCC
                  PERFORM FINAL MAPPING OF THETA
      60
                  THETA = 270. - THETA
                  IF ( THETA .LT. 0. ) THETA = THETA + 360. IF ( THETA .GT. 360. ) THETA = THETA - 360.
C
     100
                  ANGLE(I) = THETA
CCC
             SAVE RESULTS IN FILE
            OPEN (UNIT=1, NAME='LTHETA.DAT', TYPE='NEW', ACCESS='SEQUENTIAL')
            DO 105 I = 1, 471
WRITE (1,110) I+359, ANGLE(I), X(I), Y(I)
     105
    110
                  FORMAT (1X, 15, 3X, F5.1, 2(3X, F7.5))
             CLOSE (UNIT=1)
             STOP
            END
```

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Appendix C - BASIC Program to Calculate Wavelength Needed for Mixing with Anchor Wavelength to Produce Desired Pair of Chromaticity Coordinates.

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THIS PROGRAM CALCULATES WAVELENGTH NEEDED FOR MIXING, ITS X,Y
10 REM
15 REM
         COORDINATES ON THE SPECTRUM
20 REM LOCUS AND X,Y COORDINATES FOR THE DESIRED CHROMATICITY
40 REM ACHROMATIC POINT IS SET AT D65
60 REM IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE IT, ALTER THE U', V' COORDINATES IN LINE 80
80 LET X0=.1978 LET Y0=.4683
90 LET Q=57.2958
100 PRINT "ENTER X COORDINATE OF REQUIRED DOMINANT WAVELENGTH: "\INPUT X1
110 PRINT "ENTER Y COORDINATE OF REQUIRED DOMINANT WAVELENGTH; "VINPUT Y1
120 PRINT "ENTER THE FILE NAME YOU WANT THIS DATA STORED IN "VINPUT IS
130 REM CONVERTS 1931 CIE to 1976 UCS
140 LET X=4*X1/(-2*X1+12*Y1+3)
150 LET Y=9*Y1/(-2*X1+12*Y1+3)
160 IF (X-X0)<>0G0 TO 200
170 A=90
180 IF (Y-Y0)>0G0 TO 280
190 A=270\GO TO 280
200 L=(X-X0)/(Y-Y0)
210 A=ATN(L)*Q
220 IF A > 0G0 TO 250
230 IF X>X0G0 TO 270
240 A=90-A\G0 TO 280
250 IF (X-X0)>0G0 TO 275
260 IF (Y-Y0)>0G0 TO 280
270 A=270-A\G0 TO 280
275 LET A=90-A
300 REM X9, Y9 ARE X, Y COORDINATES FOR TEST FIELD
310 PRINT "WHAT IS X COORDINATE OF DESIRED COLOR?"\INPUT X9
320 PRINT "WHAT IS Y COORDINATE OF DESIRED COLOR?" \INPUT Y9
380 REM SETS MONOCHROMATOR 2 AT ANCHOR OF 655NM
390 LET X2=.72827/LET Y2=.27173
410 REM CALCULATES LENGTH OF R2 FROM 655 NM(MONOCHROMATOR) TO TEST POINT
420 IF (X9-X2)<>0G0 TO 460
430 A2=90
440 IF (Y9-Y2)>0G0 TO 550
450 A2=270\G0 T0 550
460 L9=(X9-X2)/(Y9-Y2)
470 A2=ATN(L9)*Q
480 REM A2 IS THETA FOR DESIRED CHROMATICITY POINT
490 IF A2 > 0G0 TO 520
500 IF X9 > X2G0 TO 540
510 A2=90-A2\G0 T0 550
       (X9-X2) > 0G0 T0 545
520 IF
530 IF (Y9-Y2)>0G0 TO 550
```

```
540 A2=278-A2\G0 T0 550
545 LET A2=90-A2
550 OPEN "DXO: LTHETA. DAT" FOR INPUT AS FILE VF1
560 OPEN IS FOR OUTPUT AS FILE VF2
570 FOR N=1 TO 451
580 LET T2=VF1((4*N)-2)
590 IF A2>T2G0>T0 660
600 IF A2=T2G0 T0 620
610 NEXT N
620 LET L4=VF1((4*N)-3)
630 LET X3=VF1((4*N)-1)
640 LET Y3-VF1(4*N)
650 GO TO 850
660 LET T1=VF1((4*N)-6)
670 REM FINDS ONE THETA ABOVE T2 AND STORES IT AS T1
680 LET L2=VF1((4*N)-3)
690 REM L2 IS WAVELENGTH ASSOCIATED WITH THETA
700 LET L1=VF1((4*N)-7)
710 REM L1 IS WAVELENGTH ASSOCIATED WITH THETA ABOVE
720 REM LINEAR INTERPOLATION FOLLOWS FOR LAMBDA AND X AND Y COORDS
730 L3=(T2-A2)*(L2-L1)/(T2-T1)
740 REM L3 IS AMOUNT TO CHANGE L2 BY TO RECEIVE REQUIRED LAMBDA
750 L4=(L2-L3)
760 REM L4 IS LAMBDA ASSOCIATED WITH WAVELENGTH NEEDED FOR MIXING WITH ANCHOR
770 LET X8=VF1((4*N)-1)
780 LET Y8-VF1(4*N)
790 LET X7=VF1((4*N)-5)
800 LET Y7=VF1((4*N)-4)
810 LET X4=(T1-A2)*(X7-X8)/(T1-T2)
820 LET X3=(X7-X4)
830 LET Y4=(T1-A2)*(Y7-Y8)/(T1-T2)
840 LET Y3=(Y7-Y4)
850 PRINT "MONOCHROMATOR WAVELENGTH FOR MIXING IS"L4
880 PRINT "X.Y FOR MONOCHROMATOR ARE "X3, Y3
882 PRINT "X,Y FOR DESIRED CHROMATICITY ARE"X9,Y9
885 PRINT "U',V' COORDINATES FOR DESIRED CHROMATICITY ARE"X6,Y6
890 LET VF2(1)=X3
900 LET VF2(2)=Y3
910 LET VF2(3)=L4
920 LET VF2(4)=X9
930 LET VF2(5)=Y9
940 END
```

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